

SUPERSTITIONS

Reading comprehension

Read the text carefully. Then answer all the questions and complete the tasks that follow.

1. Do you avoid walking under ladders? Do black cats make you feel **nervous**? Some people are very **superstitious**. They carry lucky charms, such as a rabbit's foot, everywhere they go. Why is a rabbit considered lucky? Because it's born with its eyes open—of course!
2. Where do superstitions come from? Long ago, people didn't have the **scientific** knowledge we have today. To cope with fear of **unexplained** events, they created rituals. These **beliefs** were passed down from generation to generation, and some superstitions have lasted for centuries. Even today, many buildings skip the 13th floor and go straight from the 12th to the 14th, although no one can agree on why the number 13 is considered unlucky.
3. Superstitious people believe they can prevent bad luck. They "knock on wood" (or "touch wood" in Britain) to avoid **jinxing** themselves. For example, if you say, "I've never broken a limb," you should immediately find something wooden to knock on—or you might break your leg tomorrow!
4. Many superstitions are related to money. For instance, giving money away on Mondays is said to mean you'll give money away all week. Leaving your purse on the floor is believed to lead to poverty. Gamblers are famously superstitious—if you're in a casino, never get up to use the restroom, or your **lucky streak** may be flushed away!
5. Superstitions vary across cultures. In some African **traditions**, a mother won't cut her baby's hair before the child's first birthday. In Mexico, brides are advised not to wear pearls on their wedding day, as pearls are said to symbolize tears and an unhappy marriage.
6. Are you superstitious? How would you react if someone opened an umbrella inside your living room?

TASK 1. Match the words with the definitions.

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|-----------------|--|
| 1 superstitious | a good fortune that happens over and over in a short time |
| 2 tradition | b too unusual or strange to be explained or understood |
| 3 lucky streak | c the transmission of customs, beliefs, or practices from generation to generation (<i>customs - kombed</i>) |
| 4 unexplainable | d understanding the world through observation, testing, and logic |
| 5 jinx | e believing that certain things can cause good or bad luck |
| 6 scientific | f worried about what might happen |
| 7 beliefs | g the feeling of being certain that something exists or is true |
| 8 nervous | h to cause bad luck to happen |

TASK 2. Read each statement carefully. Decide whether it is true or false according to the text. Write True or False.

1. Superstitions began because people had strong scientific knowledge. _____
2. All cultures share the same superstitions. _____
3. People “knock on iron” to avoid jinxing themselves. _____
4. Gamblers are often superstitious. _____
5. Opening an umbrella indoors is considered lucky. _____

TASK 3. Use words from the vocabulary in TASK 1 to complete the sentences.

1. Superstitious people feel when a black cat is near.
2. Knock on wood to avoid yourself.
3. If you're having a lucky at the casino, don't get up to use a washroom.
4. In some African, a mother won't cut her baby's hair before the child's first birthday.

TASK 4. Answer the questions in full sentences.

1. What are two examples of common superstitions mentioned in the text? (*common - tavaline*)
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2. Why did people in the past create superstitions?
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3. Why do some buildings not have a 13th floor?
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4. According to the text, why shouldn't a bride in Mexico wear pearls on her wedding day?
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